

# HOT WATTS



## The Commitment of an Electric Lineworker

Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 8

**CHEC Lineman**  
Kent Altstatt

National studies consistently rank power line installers and repairers among the most dangerous jobs in the country, and for good reason. Laboring high in the air wearing heavy equipment and working directly with high voltage creates the perfect storm of a dangerous and unforgiving profession. But electric lineworkers are up to the task. These brave men and women are committed to safety, as well as the challenges of the job.

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Pay-by-Phone: 1-888-678-1937  
www.cooksonhills.com

Alternate Emergency Only: 918-552-0016



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*Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



If you find your account number hidden in this issue of the *Hot Watts*, you'll receive a \$25 credit on your electric bill.

Got power?  
Thank a  
lineworker.

#ThankALineworker

**YOUR CHEC LINEMEN**

Kent Altstatt	Elijah Cloud	Kevin Hendrix	Jesse Ruark
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**Operation Round Up**

Each month, members of CHEC join together to help meet the charitable needs of their neighbors by participating in the Operation Round Up (ORU) program. ORU is a community outreach program that is funded by CHEC members who round up their electric bills each month. In 2018, the Foundation Board granted a total of \$61,944.10 in grants to organizations and individuals. The small change that results from “rounding up” monthly electric bills has made a big impact in the cooperative’s seven-county service area.

The CHEC Foundation Board met March 5. At the meeting, the board awarded grants to assist Nicut Rural Volunteer Fire Association, Central High Fire Association, and Liberty Volunteer Fire Fighters Association to assist in the purchase of firefighting equipment and gear. The Foundation also approved a grant for Catholic Charities to help with those in need within the local community.

The CHEC Foundation Board meets every quarter to review applications. Individuals and community organizations throughout CHEC’s service area are eligible to apply for an ORU grant. The board will meet again June 4, with applications due by May 10. For more information about ORU or to obtain an application, visit www.cooksonhills.com or contact Donna Rhodes at 918-775-2211.



## Congratulations to the 2018 Youth Tour winners!

LANA EDWARDS | ROLAND HIGH SCHOOL

MADISON GOURD | GORE HIGH SCHOOL

MADELYN MASSEY | CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

BRADEN SALAZAR | MULDROW HIGH SCHOOL



**Energy Efficiency**

**Tip of the Month**

Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25 to 30 percent less energy than standard equipment.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Keep Yourself from Having to Dig Out of Trouble

If you had a new fence to install at home, you would likely research property lines, ordinances, and fence types. Then you would get to the point of purchasing, prepping, and assembling materials to get work started. However, you would still not be ready to dig. There is a very important step missing—calling 811.

“Before starting any digging project, call 811,” advises Amber Sabin, Safe Electricity Advisory Board member. “It is a free service that will have buried public utilities marked on your property so that you can safely dig around them. Just call 811, or submit an online request at [call811.com](http://call811.com) at least a few business days before you plan to dig.”

Digging without having utility lines marked can result in damage to gas, electric, communications, water, and sewer systems. Checking the safety of a location before you begin digging is important for both professionals and homeowners. It helps prevent accidents on projects of all sizes and scopes.

When contacting 811, make sure that you have clearly identified your planned digging area and outline it in white paint if possible. The service uses ground-penetrating radar to search for and locate the buried public utility lines that are on your property. Lines will be marked with flags or paint. The color indicates the type of utility located. After the area has been marked, the CGA reports that you have less than 1 percent chance of causing damage if you respect the markings. [1367009]

If you have any private utilities, you will need to hire a private utility locator. Some examples of private utilities include: underground sprinkler system, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems, or gas piping to a garage.

If you do not know what facilities are on the property, look for clues to tell you what might be under ground, like a propane storage tank, gas meters, a detached garage or outbuilding with lights, a grill or pool on the property, manhole lids, storm drains, and pavement patches.

Even if you have had an area marked before, call to have the area checked again. Natural changes to the soil, such as erosion or root growth, can alter the depth and location of buried lines. Once all buried lines have been marked, respect the boundaries, and dig carefully.

Keep yourself from having to dig out of trouble, and call 811 before your digging project begins. For more safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



# Jason Fontaine, P.E., Director of Engineering



CHEC is excited to introduce Jason Fontaine, Director of Engineering, to the CHEC family. Jason began his employment with CHEC on October 5, 2018. His responsibilities include overseeing electric system planning, mapping, metering, and line design. Jason maintains a professional engineering license in the State of Arkansas and the State of Oklahoma.

Jason began his career by serving as a Sonar Technician aboard the nuclear powered attack submarine, USS Dallas. He received his Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Jason served as both System Engineer and Manager of Engineering for nine years at Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative. Prior to joining CHEC, Jason was employed as a Technical Products Engineer with Arkansas Electric Cooperatives and as a Senior Sales Engineer with Eaton's Cooper Power Systems.

Jason currently resides in Stigler and has two children, Cameron, age 21, and Sarah, age 17.

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CHEC's lineworkers are responsible for keeping power flowing day and night, regardless of national holidays, vacations, birthdays, weddings or other important family milestones. Beyond the years of specialized training and apprenticeships, it takes internal fortitude and a mission-oriented outlook to be a good lineworker. In fact, this service-oriented mentality is a hallmark characteristic of lineworkers. The job requires lineworkers to set aside their personal priorities to better serve their local community.

## Family Support System

To perform their jobs successfully, lineworkers depend on their years of training, experience and each other to get the job done safely.

Equally important is their reliance on a strong support system at home. A lineworker's family understands and supports their loved one's commitment to the greater community during severe storms and power outages.

This means in times of prolonged outages, the family and their lineworker may have minimal communication and not see each other for several days. Without strong family support and understanding, this challenging job would be all the more difficult.

## Community Commitment

In Oklahoma and across the country, electric co-op lineworkers' mission-focused mentality of helping others often extends beyond their commitment to their work at the co-op. Lineworkers are often familiar figures in the community. They can be found coaching youth sports teams, volunteering for local charities and serving on local advisory boards.

## Thank You

Monday, April 8 is Lineworker Appreciation Day. Given the dedication of CHEC's lineworkers, both on and off the job, I encourage you to take a moment and acknowledge the many contributions they make to our local community. And if you see their family members in the grocery store or out and about in the town, please offer them a thank you as well.



## BENEFITS OF TREE TRIMMING

Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our consumer-members.

We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as rights of way, to:

- Keep power lines clear of tree limbs
- Restore power outages more quickly
- Keep crews and members of our community safe
- Reduce unexpected costs for repairs

Vegetation management improves service reliability for you - our members!